

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF OREGON
EUGENE DIVISION**

Elizabeth HUNTER; et al., on behalf of themselves and all others similarly situated,)	Civil Action No. 6:21-cv-00474- AA
)	
Plaintiffs,)	DECLARATION OF VBP
v.)	
)	
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION and)	
Suzanne GOLDBERG, in her official capacity as)	
Acting Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights,)	
U.S. Department of Education,)	
)	
Defendants.)	

I, VBP, declare:

1. I am over 18 years of age and have personal knowledge of the matters stated in this declaration and would testify truthfully to them if called upon to do so.
2. I am a resident of Waco, Texas, located in McClennan County.
3. I grew up in Shreveport, Louisiana and graduated from a public high school in 2019.
4. I began attending Baylor University in Waco, Texas in August 2019.
5. I am a pre-law student. I expect to graduate in May 2023 with a degree in Political Science and International Studies.
6. I am a Sophomore Senator under the Legislative Branch of Baylor Student Government.
7. I am also president of College Democrats of Baylor.
8. I received a Presidential Gold scholarship to attend Baylor.
9. Baylor has multiple statements listed in its website when it comes to marriage and sexuality.
10. The school has an official policy on sexual conduct. This policy states “Baylor will be guided by the biblical understanding that human sexuality is a gift from God and that physical sexual intimacy is to be expressed in the context of marital fidelity. Thus, it is expected that Baylor students, faculty, and staff will engage in behaviors consistent with this understanding of human sexuality.”
11. Baylor’s official Statement on Human Sexuality states “Baylor University welcomes all students into a safe and supportive environment in which to discuss and learn about a variety of issues, including those of human sexuality. The University affirms the biblical

understanding of sexuality as a gift from God. Christian churches across the ages and around the world have affirmed purity in singleness and fidelity in marriage between a man and a woman as the biblical norm. Temptations to deviate from this norm include both heterosexual sex outside of marriage and homosexual behavior. It is expected that Baylor students will not participate in advocacy groups which promote understandings of sexuality that are contrary to biblical teaching.”

12. This statement makes me feel like I don't belong at Baylor.
13. Baylor does not practice what it preaches about diversity, inclusion, love and support because Baylor does not take actions to make us feel safe and supported. Words are not enough and ring hollow without action.
14. Baylor's official statement on Human Sexuality then directs students "struggling" with these issues to go to some form of counselling at one of the on-campus counselling centers.
15. Baylor says that it does not condone conversion therapy but this statement sounds like the promotion of conversion therapy by another name.
16. Baylor University also has a statement of "Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion" which states "we seek to embody Christ's teachings of love and inclusivity across boundaries of racial, ethnic, gender, socio-economic, religious, and other expressions of human difference. Because, at Baylor, 'Love thy neighbor' are not just words...they are a way of life."
17. In practice, Baylor does not live up to this commitment.
18. This "way of life" seems to be a value of the school, except when it is not, such as when Baylor expressly allows for discrimination, as stated in Baylor's Civil Rights policy, "As a religiously controlled institution of higher education, Baylor is exempt from compliance with select provisions of certain civil rights laws, and Baylor is also exempt from prohibitions of discrimination based on religion. As such, the University prescribes standards of personal conduct which are consistent with its religious mission and values".
19. This statement tells me that Baylor cares more about its right to discriminate against queer and other students than it does about the health and safety of its queer and other students.
20. This policy of discrimination makes me feel unsafe and unprotected by the law.
21. Baylor is unlikely to discipline queer students merely for being queer. However, Baylor's policy forbidding "homosexual behavior" and its other statements condemning queer identities and relationships, makes me feel like I could never show affection to a queer partner and that I would be at risk of discipline and ridicule if I were to hold their hand or give them a kiss in public.
22. I am a queer woman.

23. I initially attended Baylor as I considered it a safe school. It was close to home without being too close. Baylor could get me where I wanted to go in life and would put me on the career path that I wanted.
24. However, I have dealt with discrimination by my peers at Baylor since I came out. The school makes little effort to do anything about it.
25. The school's common response to my reporting hate on campus is that I should go to counselling. As a result, I stopped reporting incidents.
26. The incidents of harassment and discrimination against me include: (1) cruel, homophobic Instagram comments, including "#f**runner #notinmygoodbaptistuniversity"; (2) someone left a Bible at my dorm door, that was annotated and highlighted all of the Scriptures that they claimed were against homosexuality; it also contained a handwritten note that said "I'm praying for you," (3) I've had sticky notes left on my door that use the f** slur, which I reported to Baylor, but nothing was done about it.
27. Baylor has also defended a professor who sent a transphobic tweet that caused a lot of concern among queer students at Baylor. This felt like another betrayal of Baylor's purported values.
28. I am participating in this lawsuit because I want Baylor to realize what it is doing it wrong and harmful. There is no excuse for ostracizing, discriminating against, and hurting their students.



30. Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §1746, I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct, and that this declaration was executed this 27th day of February, 2021.

By:



VBP